

**Claims**

What is claimed is:

- 5        1. A liner device for a live bait container to enable the live bait to spread out within the container, the device comprising:
- a mesh layer having a series of linear elements forming a geometrical pattern with spaces between the linear elements, the linear elements spaced apart a sufficient distance to enable live bait to climb on the mesh layer, the mesh layer positioned within a live bait
- 10       container having an interior bottom and surrounding interior wall surfaces, the mesh layer positioned in front of and conforming to the shape of the interior wall surfaces and the mesh layer contacting the interior bottom to enable the live bait to crawl from the interior bottom up the mesh layer and spread out within the bait container.
- 15       2. The device of claim 1 wherein the mesh layer comprises a preformed structure in the shape of the interior bottom and interior wall surfaces of the bait container, the mesh layer having a rigid lip formed around the top of the mesh layer, the rigid lip structured to fit with a friction fit against the interior wall surfaces adjacent to the top of the container so that no live bait can climb between the mesh layer and the container.
- 20       3. The device of claim 2 wherein a lower portion of the mesh layer below the rigid lip contacts the interior bottom and interior wall surfaces of the bait container.

4. The device of claim 2 wherein a lower portion of the mesh layer below the rigid lip is spaced apart from the interior bottom and interior wall surfaces of the bait container.
- 5 5. The device of claim 2 wherein the mesh layer is molded into the interior bottom and interior wall surfaces of the bait container when the bait container is formed by a molding process.